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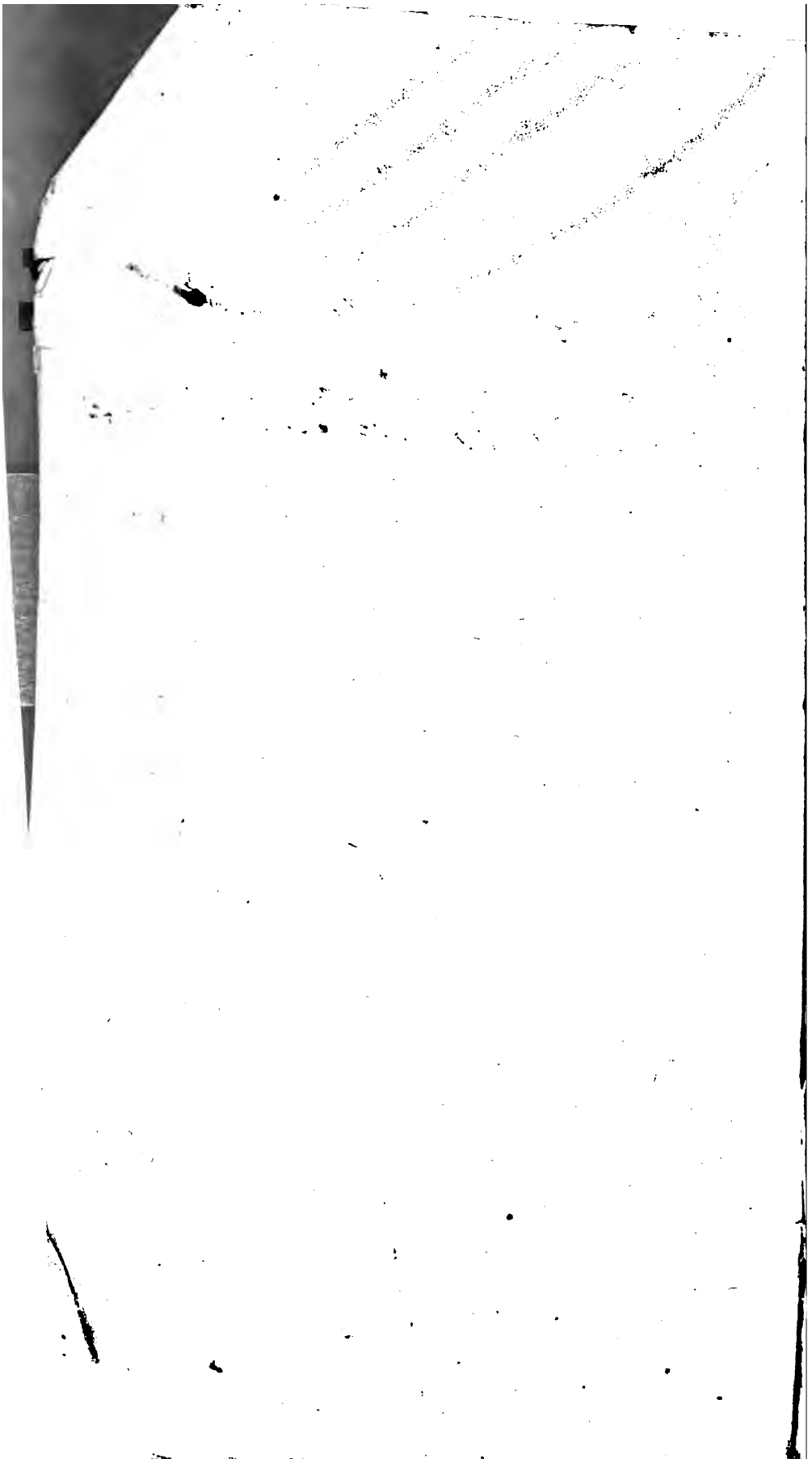

Memoir

OF THE

REV. BENJAMIN GOODIER.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

Memoir

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REV. BENJAMIN GOODIER.

ABRIDGED FROM THE ENGLISH EDITION.

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. BENJAMIN GOODIER.

The following account of this pious and devoted minister, whose uncommon promise was early cut off, is principally abridged from an interesting volume of the Memoirs of his life, published within the present year at Liverpool. We have read it with the highest gratification, and shall be glad to extend to others, something of the pleasure and improvement to be derived from such an example of activity in duty, and patience in suffering.

Benjamin Goodier was the son of a weaver, in Failsworth, near Manchester, where he was born April 25th, 1793. He was bred to his father's trade from an early age, and pursued it as his business until after he began his preparation for the ministry, which was in 1813.

He gave indications, in early childhood, of uncommon talents and goodness. When only five years old, he became a member of a library for children, and at ten was accustomed to write letters on various subjects, suggested by the books he read, to his little companions. His memory was so remarkable, that, as one instance of it, he learned the multiplication table in one hour. A part of his small earnings were devoted to the purchase of books, and a part to charitable uses. Not satisfied with his own means of charity, he was in the habit of asking his playfellows for pence, which he gave to the poor whom he

met with, and whom he would also often seek out and visit in their wretched abodes.

His religious impressions were strong and habitual from early childhood. The journal, which he was accustomed to keep, exhibits constant proof of the devotion of his mind, his earnestness to know and do his duty, and his strong feeling of responsibility. A narrow escape for his life, when he was eighteen, the severe sickness of himself and sister, the straitened circumstances of the family, and the long distressing illness, and patient pious death of his mother, constituted a discipline, which undoubtedly helped to confirm and improve his religious character, and to prepare his mind for the work to which providence was leading him, and his own painful and premature removal.

In the years 1811 and 1812, he became an attendant of meetings for discussion of religious subjects, held once a fortnight, at different houses, and so distinguished himself by the excellent spirit and ability which displayed themselves, both in his extemporaneous discussion and his written discourses, as to attract the admiration of some benevolent Christians, who occasionally attended, and who felt that he was formed for usefulness in a higher sphere. They accordingly entered into a subscription, in order to furnish him with the means of pursuing his preparatory studies, and fitting himself for the ministry. Thus in a moment, as it were, providence changed the plans of his life. His new prospects inspired him with new and delightful hopes, and he gave the whole ardour of his mind to study, though he did not relinquish his usual occupation of weaving, until he entered Mr Aspland's Academy, at Hackney, in April 1813. At this time, his journal contains the following entry.

'April 25, 1813. On this day, I shall complete my twentieth year. It becomes me to consider the many blessings I have enjoyed in the course of my life, also the improvements I have, or might have, made of them. In this period, the goodness of God towards me has been great indeed; the mercies I have received have been greater than I can value, and more than I can number. Who is it that caused me to be born in a country where the glad tidings of the Gospel are heard? Who is it that has given me parents, who have educated me to consider the Gospel as the best gift of God to man? Who is it that, amidst the many corruptions of Christianity, has so appointed

things, that I have been brought up in the knowledge of "the only true God and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent;" knowledge which is invaluable; which tends to comfort the heart and disperse these clouds of darkness, those mists of superstition, which attend the popular systems of theology?' 'I have lately arrived at this place for the purpose of entering upon the studies preparatory to the christian ministry; this object is one of the most important which can engage the attention of any man. By entering here, I become placed under many obligations and duties, to which I have hitherto been a stranger, and am, indeed, exposed to an awful responsibility. Whether I consider the expectations of my friends and relations, the obligations I am under to the supporters of this Academy, the necessity of doing credit to my worthy Instructor, or the importance of the office I am preparing to fulfil, the great variety of the knowledge I ought to possess, connected with the shortness of the time allowed for the preparation, I feel my mind forcibly impressed with the absolute necessity of redeeming the time. May God assist me in this arduous undertaking, and whatsoever I do, may it prosper!'

These enlarged views of the extent of his duties, and his anxious hopes to gratify the expectations of his friends, were not unavailing. He pursued his studies with the greatest assiduity. The great object of his exertions was ever before him, and he continued to cultivate that amiable temper and those bevevolent dispositions, which peculiarly fitted him for that sphere of usefulness, to which, at this time, he looked forwards with so much hope. He attended at religious conferences, which were carried on in the lecture room of the Gravel Pit meeting, where he distinguished himself equally by his talents and his candour, his knowledge of the Scriptures, and his pleasing manner of conveying information.

Mr Goodier began to preach during the summer of this year, and seems to have fulfilled the expectations of his patrons and friends. But in the midst of his studies and success, his health began to fail him, and in a little more than a year he was so seriously ill, as to be obliged to relinquish his labours and return for a time, to his father's house. Here, though forbidden his studies and professional labours, he resumed his former benevolent pursuits, and devoted himself to the instruction of the ignorant and the improvement of those around him. From one of the letters which he wrote during this period, we learn what

it is that most interested him, and have a grateful picture of the efforts for religious improvement, which were making in his neighbourhood.

'I find the interests of Unitarianism here to be in a very flourishing state. During my absence, the spirit of rational inquiry and of zealous exertion, which had been excited principally by the missionary labours of Mr. W. and the lectures of Mr G., have been much more generally diffused than ever, and I think I may safely venture to say, that now, in the different Unitarian congregations in and about Manchester, there are but few, even amongst the young, who are unable to give a reason for the hope that is in them. One of the most pleasing effects of this spirit is, the establishment of a quarterly conversation meeting amongst the young people of several congregations around Manchester, to be held in rotation at their different chapels, for the discussion of subjects connected with Theology. This meeting has already been carried on a year; it has excited the attention and provoked the opposition of the orthodox sects, and in consequence has drawn our young friends into discussion. If it be steadily conducted, I anticipate great advantages from it, not only in exciting and keeping up the spirit of free inquiry, but also in bringing the members of the congregations connected with it into a more intimate acquaintance with each other. Notwithstanding the good already done, there is still much to do—the moral state of the villages around me is very deplorable, much worse, I think, than before peace—drunkenness and swearing fill our streets, and I shall never think the triumphs of Unitarianism complete, till it has not only corrected the *sentiments* of the religious world, but also impressed the hearts and reformed the *practice* of those who never felt the influence of religion. The harvest therefore is truly plenteous, and I may add, the labourers are few; indeed, when I compare the number of labourers with the extent of the work, and reflect on the satisfaction which must be felt by every diligent labourer, I must acknowledge, that were the message of Hezekiah sent to me, "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live;"—though I should have no doubt but such a message would be intended by the all-wise Disposer of events, to remove me from the present to some other state of enjoyment and usefulness, yet I should feel reluctant and unhappy.'

After an absence of a few weeks, Mr Goodier returned to Hackney, his health a little improved, and his hope of its restoration strong; but he never recovered it wholly. The rest of his days were spent in struggling against disease. He re-

mained a year at the Academy, but his health forbade his continuance for a longer period, and it became necessary to make its restoration a principal object of attention. Yet even in the journeyings and various other means which he pursued for this purpose, he kept in view the great cause of religion, and laboured beyond his strength to promote it. His letters at this time depict the state of his mind, and the works which engaged him.

The following passage exhibits the quick sensibility with which he felt the privation of the exercise of his accustomed powers of usefulness, chastened by that spirit of resignation and piety which taught him to extract good even from the darkest dispensations of Providence, and made affliction itself a source of increasing virtues and trust. 'I had hoped that the country would have been highly beneficial, but I cannot say that I am much better than when I left London. I feel the deprivation of health more keenly here, perhaps, than I did at Durham-house, because there is so large a field of usefulness, and such a prospect of success around me. If I were able I could be fully engaged in preaching and conversation meetings in the neighbouring villages. We want preachers for the poor, and I flatter myself that I could be useful amongst them. I am aware, however, that we are apt to entertain too high an idea of our own labours, and to attach too much importance to them; and if there was need of me in the vineyard of the Lord, I should be fitted for the work. Some of the happiest moments of my life have been spent in the labours connected with the Christian ministry, and I am anxious to resume and continue these labours. But if the all-wise Disposer of events, in whose hands our breath is, and "whose are all our ways," ordains otherwise, I shall strive to resign myself. I am fully persuaded that *His* appointments are wisest and justest, and best; and that under *His* fatherly government we are all safe. As a Christian, and especially as a Unitarian Christian, I trust I shall never be long unhappy. Could I attain to that firm conviction of the Divine goodness in all his dealings with men, which animates your breast, and breathes in all your writings and conversation, I should rejoice and be happy indeed.'

He at this time took an active part in aid of the religious society at Oldham, where he had preached his first sermons, and after the completion of their chapel, in January 1816, consented to preach there for a season. This he did amidst great pain and at great personal risk, yet buoyed up by the fervour of his spirit and an unconquerable zeal. He flattered himself

that his health was improving, and suffered himself, as so many others have done, to be imposed upon by the deceptive appearances of his disorder. He was too little aware of the actual state of his system to avoid unseasonable imprudences and allow himself necessary indulgence. His strong interest in the people at Oldham and his eager desire to share their fortunes, contributed to blind him to the truth. A letter which he wrote at this period, gives so fine a picture of his feelings on this and other subjects, that we quote it largely. It is addressed to Mrs Hughs, the well known writer of many excellent tracts.

'To return to Oldham. Our infant society continues to gain strength, and if it be well nursed, I have no doubt of its future prosperity. Since the opening, the attendance has been very encouraging, and still keeps up. * * * I am delighted every time I preach there, with the fixed and serious attention of the congregation. Most of those who join us are poor people, but we have one or two families of some property, able and willing to receive and entertain the ministers who come to preach. A few weeks ago I was determined to know something of the people who have lately joined us, and I went to see six or seven families, with whom I was previously unacquainted. I found them composed chiefly of persons who for many years have been in the habit of altogether neglecting public worship. They have been disgusted with popular theology, and popular preachers, and have therefore laid aside all religious profession, or rather have never gained any religious character. This I find to be the case with most of our converts; they are sensible and well disposed, but no religion, except Unitarianism, would ever have done them good. In consequence of a total neglect of public worship, they have not the devotional habits we should wish, and it will require sometime to form them. There is a numerous body of such people in the neighbourhood of Oldham, some of whom have become Deists, by reading Paine's works; so that on the one hand, we have to contend with the bigotry of orthodoxy, and on the other, with unbelief and indifference. However, we gain ground; and such is my conviction of the efficacy of Scriptural Christianity, that I believe and am confident, that we shall gain ground. The society are very urgent with me to engage myself as their minister, a request which places me in a difficult situation. The arduousness of the task would ill comport with my precarious state of health; and the smallness of the salary they would be able to raise, ill suits the present posture of affairs. On the other hand, there are several inducements to my acceding to their request. By so doing, I should be building upon my own foundation.

Their existence as a society, and mine as a Christian Minister began together. They are strongly prejudiced in my favour; and, however poor, will always be an affectionate, and many of them a pious people; two of the members can assist in preaching; and many of them, by conversing, are able to advance the cause. I know their habits, have been accustomed to their manners, and should be more likely perhaps to be useful than a stranger. My wants are very few, and will be easily satisfied. I can live very cheaply at home, and I am confident that by devoting myself to the service of the poor, I shall be laying up treasures in Heaven. Dr Boerhaave used to say, that the poor were his most profitable patients, because God was their paymaster. These considerations incline me to accept their invitation, reserving to myself the liberty of spending the next Spring and Summer in re-establishing my health. Preaching is injurious to me; but I refrain from it as much as I can. I am apt to forget myself sometimes when in the pulpit, and on Sunday last was so pleased with my subject, that I spoke too loud and too long, which brought on a pain in my breast. It has now left me, and my cough is seldom troublesome. I intend to visit Mr F. towards the middle of next month, and as Summer advances, I may perhaps remove more southward. * * * * What beautiful and useful papers Mrs Cappe has lately given us in the Repository; and if it did not look like flattery, I should say the same of "the last (sad word) poor man's friend." When I read such papers, I am tempted to wish that writers like Mrs H. and Mrs C. might live for ever; and were it not that such a wish would be injurious to you, I should certainly utter it; but when Christians like you "can stand a tip toe on the mountain top of human life, look down with pleasure upon the valley they have passed, and sometimes stretch their wings in joyful hope of a happy flight into eternity," it were cruelty to bind them down to earth. The world's loss will be your great gain. I do not say this as a believer in that comfortless sleep of ages, of which you speak so resignedly; but as convinced, that whether dead or alive, we are in the hands of our Father, in whose hands it shall be *well* for the good.

'Your reflections on the polite indifference of the —— congregation are forcible and just; they are but too applicable to our Unitarian brethren; and I fear that even where indifference has given place to zeal, it is too often a sectarian, rather than a Christian—a speculative, rather than a practical, zeal. Are not many of us too solicitous to clear the head to leave time for the improvement of the heart? I think this is the rock on which we are in danger of splitting. The high born hopes, and glorious

prospects of the Christian are too seldom the topics of conversation amongst us; and we are so afraid of enthusiasm and superstition, that we scarcely dare to be pious.'

In contemplating Mr Goodier's situation at this period, the disinterestedness of his character is peculiarly apparent—cut off from the pursuit of his studies, and the completion of his education, by his unfortunate state of health, his thoughts might naturally have turned upon himself, and his own future circumstances; but in the midst of languor, disappointment and disease, his first cares and solicitudes, were still evidently for the improvement, the virtue, and the moral interests of others. To gain a subscription that might afford a place of worship for the diffusion of pure and Scriptural Christianity amongst his people, he had roused himself from the indulgence of needful relaxation, and submitted to toil, solicitation, and trouble; and having at length effected this object so near to his heart, he was now contemplating still further efforts in the same cause. With few inducements but the increased power of doing good, and the benefits he might thus confer upon the poor, he was about to accept a situation, which would necessarily expose him to new cares and anxieties, to many unavoidable exertions, and much responsibility and privation; he was fully aware of the high and arduous nature of the duties he was going to undertake, and particularly the toil attending the cultivation and improvement of many of the congregation, who, though affectionate, were yet ignorant, and required a watchfulness unnecessary in the high classes of society. All these objections Mr Goodier weighed as light in the balance, when compared with the opportunity of sowing the seeds of knowledge and virtue. To reform the sinner, to comfort the miserable, to instruct the careless, and thus to be the means of turning many to righteousness, was to him the most delightful of all tasks, and he welcomed with gladness the prospects thus held out to him of preaching the Gospel to the poor. In becoming *their* minister he endeavoured to become also their friend and brother; he visited them with affectionate interest—he participated in their pains and sorrows—he became their faithful adviser and comforter; these were pleasures which alleviated the interruptions of sickness, and which brightened his lonely hours with the light of benevolence and joy.

In June of this year, he sailed to the Isle of Wight, for the purpose of spending the summer there in the service of a congregation at Newport, and in hope that the change might be beneficial to his health. The people urgently entreated him to remain with them, and the physician recommended it, as a winter in the north would be decidedly injurious to him. But

he felt himself bound to his little flock at Oldham, and not being able to supply them to his satisfaction, he resolved to sacrifice personal considerations, and go back to them. But for this effort his strength was unequal, and he remained at the Isle of Wight during the winter; and unhappily, notwithstanding all the kind attentions of his friends, and the best advice to be procured, his health continued to decline. In his letters to his friend Mr C., at this time, he gives an unfavourable report of it, and looks forward, anxiously and doubtfully, towards the future; though his customary feelings of devotion and religious confidence, still shed their light through the surrounding gloom. He says, 'I am still very weak and closely confined, except in very fine weather; indeed, this winter, though mild in the extreme, I have suffered more than in any preceding one. I have not ascended the pulpit since the middle of last October, and when I shall again be able, I cannot say. Under these circumstances, I sometimes feel it hard to think that all is well, and working for good, but at the same time I find the unspeakable value of Unitarian views of the Gospel.'

He again writes in March, in the following affecting strain; 'You ask if God hath forgotten to be gracious; No, my dear friend, nor ever will. In the midst of every judgment, I can sing of mercy; and in my serious, reasonable moments, have ever felt the consolations of religion; but the stroke of affliction has been very heavy, and at times despondency and grief have been uppermost. The throne of grace has been surrounded with clouds and darkness. I am now improving in health and spirits, and had I a prospect of speedily resuming my pulpit labour, I should be as happy as a child of Adam ought to be on this side death; but this is forbidden by both physicians and friends, and, like my first parents, I am driven from my earthly paradise; my return is prevented by a disease which brandishes death in a shape terrible as the fiery sword, and my lot is as much worse than his, as solitude is worse than society. He had a partner, a wife; I am alone, weak and helpless. Come and correct this description; remind me that Providence is my guide, that I have many kind friends and relations, who are able and willing to assist and comfort, and that happiness is yet in the reach of your's,' &c.

In April, Mr G. wrote to Mrs H., and in this letter, the quick sensibility with which he felt the extent of his trial, and the struggle it cost him, even with all his confidence and piety,

to attain perfect resignation, is feelingly depicted. It is a proof of the value of those consolations which can calm even the risings of natural regret, and infuse a spirit of peace in the bosom of pain and disease.

'I had written thus far yesterday, when Mrs C., my hostess, returned from her morning's walk, and with a mild severity of tone, exclaimed, "What! Mr G., still writing?" And then, with a gentle roughness of manner, insisted upon my "putting it away directly." I was forced to submit, and yielded the more readily, because I was fully convinced the command was dictated by kindness, and, though it might be accompanied by apparent severity, was meant only for my good. Is not this a good illustration of the Divine dealings with his children? Could we penetrate his counsels, and see the object of his apparently severe dispensations, as clearly as I could see the intention of Mrs C's conduct, should we not invariably find that this object was to train us to happiness by leading to goodness? The voice of Scripture will answer "yes;" and the language of experience will confirm the answer. Thus have I often endeavoured to reason, and to establish the conviction firmly in my mind, so as to make it a ruling principle of my thoughts and action—*that all things are working together for my good.*—When I have been able to abstract myself from the influence of external circumstances, and to give myself up almost entirely to the suggestions of reason and religion, I have found it comparatively easy to come to the cheering conclusion, that however mysterious the ways of Providence may appear, they must proceed from goodness and mercy, and I have been able to say (I hope with true resignation) "thy will, O God! be done!" On the other hand, when I have thought of the complete derangement of all my plans, which my sickness has occasioned, and the death blow it has given to my future prospects of happiness, by disabling me from preaching for years to come; when I have connected this with the distresses of the times, which have involved in ruin thousands of respectable families; I have felt that that poet had studied human nature, who makes even the resigned Christian to say, after surrendering himself entirely to God,—

'But ah! my heart within me cries,
Still bind me to thy sway;
Else, the next cloud that veils the skies
Drives all these thoughts away.'

I need not say to you, that sickness and disappointment teach me to feel the force of language like this.'

Mr Goodier was detained longer than he intended in the Isle of Wight, from the unfavourable state of his health, and he did not remove to Shrewsbury till the middle of June. His spirits were much depressed, and the separation from many affectionate friends, and some in particular, with whom he had shared the comforts and sympathies of home, could not take place without many melancholy and painful feelings. He had gone to the island almost a stranger among strangers—he had been received with kindness and welcomed with cordial hospitality—his ministerial services had been approved and successful—he had been domesticated amongst them, and loved them; and he had received from them the warm affection and generous attentions which are in sickness so consoling, and for which they considered themselves fully repaid by the pleasure they derived from his society and friendship.

Mr G. accompanied his kind friends to Liverpool, where he experienced every attention and indulgence, which affection could suggest. But he was now becoming himself but too sensible of the certain, though slow, increase of his complaint, from the continued weakness and lassitude which he suffered. The summer had come, and had brought with it soft air and mild days, but it had not restored his exhausted frame. The 'warm weather' he had wished for so long, at last arrived, but it no longer brought renewed feelings of strength and hope to the weary sufferer. He occasionally indeed, felt the delusive expectation incident to his disease, but in his hours of reflection he knew it was but delusion. Writing to his father in August, he says, 'since you left, I have continued much as I was; always fancying myself better than when in the Isle of Wight, and yet conscious that I am thinner and weaker than I was in the spring. Last Wednesday, Mr F. called upon a Dr ——, a very scientific and skilful physician of this town, and desired him to come and see me, with a view to his advice as to the propriety of a voyage, or whether wintering abroad would be necessary or likely to prove useful: he came the next morning and was with us upwards of two hours. * * I wished him to be explicit in his opinion, and told him, that after the many advantages I had enjoyed during the last twelve months, still finding myself emaciated and weak, I had little or no expectation of my recovery. He was very candid and

open.'—Mr Goodier's physician advised that he should try what medicine might effect, before he finally decided on a sea voyage, and in this opinion the patient himself very willingly acquiesced. Immediately after his arrival in Liverpool he wrote to his father, and though it is painful to record the details of his suffering, yet they exhibit in so interesting a light that patience and gentleness under severe trial, which is so conspicuous in every period of his short life, that they cannot in justice to himself be omitted.

'DEAR FATHER, 'Liverpool, July 19, 1817.

'My conscience has continually reproached me for some time past, for not writing to you, in order to relieve you in some measure from the anxiety of mind which my last letter would naturally occasion, and also to give you farther information of my state of health. I can defer the task no longer; especially as it is necessary that you should know of my arrival in this town. I call writing a task, because it requires such an exertion as ill agrees with my lethargy of mind, and weakness of body; however, I am better able to write now than when I last addressed you; when for six or seven nights I had been unable to sleep much, and had unfortunately been exposed to the fatigue of travelling, and the vexatious impositions of strangers. I met with every attention from Mr and Mrs F., who did every thing in their power to restore me. Indeed, I am often astonished at the kindness of these excellent people, and of my friends in general. Not a day passes without abundant reason to be thankful to that bountiful Providence, which has raised me up such generous helpers in such a time of need. The journey was charming on account of the richness of the country through which we passed, the agreeable mode, and company in which I travelled, and the kindness of Mrs F., who treats me as a son, and in every thing shows that she is interested for my recovery. I have said this was doubtful, if not hopeless, and that I considered myself in a confirmed consumption; perhaps this was rather the account of temporary despondency, than of actual truth. Mr B. thinks a voyage and spending the winter in a warmer climate, would be the most likely means of recovery.

'The suffering I have already endured has not, I trust, been lost upon me; and if by it, the Great Former of all things is intending eventually to take down this tabernacle of flesh, I

can truly say with R. A. that He is doing it gently and mercifully, and I have little doubt but another will be prepared for me through his grace, eternal in the Heavens. A prayer I have often uttered, has been heard and answered, that from the experience of the past, I might be enabled to trust with confidence in the goodness of God for the future. This I have reason to do. I am sure I shall never want any thing that is really necessary for me; and whether I exist in this world or another, still as I shall be always under the government of God, all will be well, all will work together for good, if it be not my own fault. These sentiments support and cheer me, and whatever be the result of my sickness, I trust you will be content; I am not indifferent to this result, and cannot but hope that it will be *life*:—life, though accompanied with many troubles, as you have lately but too well experienced, I fear, is still an invaluable gift, and I prize it; many things I wish to learn —many things to do; but if it be appointed otherwise, "I have hope towards God," that not even death will be able to separate me for ever from his favour.'

On the 14th of August, he wrote to Mrs H., and this letter breathes a beautiful spirit of piety and heavenly mindedness, not unmingled with some feelings of painful and natural regret in the contemplation of the probable termination of his sufferings.

'Liverpool, August 14, 1817.

'I have been debating with myself for the last five minutes, my dear Mrs H., whether I should send you simply an account of my health and of the plans I intend to adopt, or indulge myself in filling a sheet as usual, when I correspond with you. I shall have an opportunity of sending tomorrow to Shrewsbury, and I feel as if it would be an act of injustice, did I not allow myself at least the chance of covering a sheet. Several of my friends tell me in their letters that I may satisfy their anxiety in five or six lines, but they forget that I cannot in so short a compass satisfy my own desire of conversing with them, and compensating myself in some degree by their ideal presence, for the privation I suffer in their real absence. Write a note of five or six lines to Mrs H.! It would be as difficult almost as to be compelled to speak only half a dozen sentences to her, were I now seated in her company at Hanwood. I might, perhaps, be led to acquiesce in such a restriction, if you were to engage to fill up the time by your own conversation, and in like manner

if I durst hope that I should continue to receive from you occasionally letters so delightfully full as your's have in general been, I might perhaps be persuaded to write with laconic brevity. I do not say this altogether from a selfish motive, but partly from a conviction that my letters, however completely filled, can never give you half the pleasure which I receive from your's; if they could, no circumstance, but such as disabled me from writing altogether, would prevent me from addressing you at every convenient opportunity. As, however, you kindly condescend to be interested in my welfare, and have generously favoured me with your friendship and correspondence, though I cannot hope to give you any equivalent in return, and never write to you under the impression that I communicate half the pleasure I receive, yet I feel it to be a privilege, an honour not easily to be resigned, to write as much to you as I please. With these sentiments, why (I have frequently asked myself)—why did I not better improve the opportunity which my late visit into Shropshire afforded me, of conversing with you?—why did I not disclose to you more fully the state of my mind, with respect to death and futurity?—and why did I not converse more frequently on those grand and enlivening subjects—those bright and transporting prospects, which pure Christianity suggests and unfolds to the sincere followers of Jesus? I cannot answer these questions to my complete satisfaction. I am sensible that I did not improve as much as I ought to have done, the privilege of your company and conversation; and it is scarcely a sufficient excuse that my journey had brought on such a debility of body, and nervous irritability of mind, accompanied at times by a lethargic stupor, as almost unfitted me from sharing the benefit of the best company and most instructive conversation. How kind it is of you, under these circumstances, to make up, in some degree, a loss arising from weakness and perhaps inattention, by favouring me with so long a letter as your last! Believe me, my dear madam, when I consider the exertion which such a letter must have cost your delicate frame, I feel sensibly the obligations under which I am placed by the receipt of it. But while you are striving to convince me that life is a scene of great and intense suffering, with the hope of thus leading me more willingly to resign a boon which you think I value too highly, are you not at the same time binding me to earth by those endearing ties—those silken cords you mention, gratitude and affection? Can it,

think you, be an easy task to break those cords when they connect me to such friends as you, Mrs F., Mr A—d, and a host of others—to say nothing of a kind father and a long list of relations? I know that you will reply, that these same cords connect me with Heaven, the abode of that Great Being in whom is the fountain of life and goodness, and from whom I have received all those blessings of friendship which have made my life comfortable and happy, which have almost robbed adversity of its sting, and taken from disappointment half its bitterness. I feel the force of the argument, and am sensible that I have much to answer for, if your friendship for me has not made me more alive to the importance of heavenly mindedness, and more anxious to cultivate a spirit of entire devotedness to the will of God, valuing only, and only wishing for, what he approves. This spirit has breathed in every epistle with which you have favoured me, and in the tracts you have given us from the press it stands preeminent. I trust that some portion of it animates my breast, and though I value life highly, with all its troubles, yet I feel a cheerful confidence in believing that I do not fear death, and that when my heavenly Father calls, I shall not be unwilling to obey. I am fearful of saying too much on this subject, for I must acknowledge that were life and death equally within my power, life would be my choice. I cannot conceive that the love of life is sinful; on the contrary, the gospel revelation of a future and everlasting existence, in which our degree of enjoyment will depend upon our good or ill conduct here, stamps the present life with a value inexpressible. At the same time I agree with you that the wise Author of our existence knows best when that existence should be suspended, or continued in some other stage of being; and the reflection, that whether living or dying, we are the objects of *His* care, takes away much from the terrors of the grave. Continue your kind efforts to raise my thoughts above earthly concerns, and I trust you will meet here with some recompense in my improvement; and thus, whether or not we meet again in this world, our meeting will be joyful, and contribute to our mutual happiness. * * With my good wishes for yourself and for all your house, I remain, in health or sickness, your obliged and affectionate friend,' &c.

As the winter approached, it was determined that the experiment of a warmer climate should be made; and after some hesitation and suspense in the selection of a place, he set sail,

on the first of January 1818, for the south of France, and arrived at Bordeaux on the 13th. Here he spent the last declining six months of his life, in almost constant suffering, but not without occasional encouragement and hope. His Journal and Letters during this period are full of interest. It is from them that the account is gathered, of all which is known respecting his condition and feelings to the last. We have no room in this place for extracts from his journal, which was partly written in English and partly in French. From his letters we select the following.

'Bordeaux, February, 17, 1818.

'DEAR FATHER,

'A few days hence, Captain A., with whom I came to Bordeaux, will set sail for Liverpool, and has promised to take me any letters I may wish. You will be anxious to know how I am, and what I think of the climate and people, and I cannot permit so good an opportunity of sending to you to pass by unimproved. I wished to lodge in the country if possible, and a Mr J., to whom I had a good introduction, procured me a lodging about six miles from town, which is almost every thing I could wish. The family with whom I live are relations of Mrs J., and having been unfortunate in trade, have retired into the country to cultivate a small estate, of between thirty and forty acres. They keep eight or ten cows, and live in a neat and economical manner. The surrounding country is flat, but well-flooded, and will soon begin to be beautiful. The family are of Irish extraction, and speak both French and English. They are very attentive to me, and I have nothing to wish for but a horse. I wish I could add that I find myself rapidly recovering, but owing to the wet weather, which confined me a whole week to the house, and also to a severe cold which I caught a day or two after my arrival at Bordeaux, I do not feel so much improved as I had expected. I walk out a good deal, but find a couple of miles a fatiguing journey. Fine warm weather is, however, now coming on, and in a month or six weeks you may expect to hear a good account from me. I intend to proceed further to the south at the end of that time, and shall probably stay some time at Toulouse. I shall improve the present opportunity, as much as possible, of seeing men and manners. I am very desirous of knowing the French character thoroughly from personal observation, and also of learning the state of public opinion and of religion. At present,

I am shut out from the world completely, and cannot observe much; but I am busily employed in learning to speak French, and in six weeks I hope to be able to converse in it with tolerable ease and correctness.

'Short as my stay has been, I have seen enough to make me rejoice that I am a native of England. We rail at the government, and with reason, perhaps; we call ourselves slaves, who have been robbed of liberty by an arbitrary suspension of the habeas corpus, but after all, we enjoy far more liberty than the people of France; we have liberty of conscience, which is here unknown, liberty of speech, which is here forbidden, and liberty of reading, which is here proscribed. There are two Protestant churches in Bordeaux, and though the members think the present a peaceable and favourable time for them, yet I find the ministers dare not defend their sentiments publicly, and none of the people would venture on any account to attempt the conversion of an ignorant Catholic; and as to the poor Catholics, the great majority of the people, they are the slaves of superstition, and priestcraft, and ceremony. It would grieve you to attend one of their public services—to witness their crossings and bowings to images of Christ, or to the altar, and hear them attempt to join in chanting Latin prayers, not a word of which they understand. Ignorance and bigotry go hand in hand, and I suppose if, after having learnt French, I should attempt to preach Unitarianism, the guillotine would be my reward. The English at Bordeaux are numerous, but have no church of their own, nor any service in English; many of them understand French very well, and attend at the Protestant temples as they are called. In these temples, *doctrines* are seldom insisted upon I believe, and as far as I have yet learnt, they seem in this respect to be much in the same state as our congregations were twenty years ago; a mixture of Trinitarians, Arians, and a few Socinians, as we are here called. Here, however, the grand distinction is between Protestants and Catholics. In this, minor differences are sunk, and were I strong enough for the undertaking, I should not despair of raising a church at Bordeaux amongst those English who do not understand French sufficiently to profit by the services of the Protestants. You will perceive that I am deprived of the advantages of public worship; I feel the loss to be considerable, and am afraid I shall suffer by it. To attend the Catholics is impossible; I should be seized with melancholy. Protestants,

there are none near, except the family I am with and their fathers, who are of the Church of England.'

'My Dear Mrs F. 'Montauban, May 29, 1818.

'I am happy to be able through the blessing of a good Providence, to write a less melancholy letter than my last. I am in every respect much better than in March, and am gradually though slowly improving. You will see by the date of this, that I have left the neighbourhood of Bordeaux, and I am sorry that my lameness prevented me from leaving sooner. The neighbourhood of Bordeaux is flat, low, and subject to very frequent rains, which charge the atmosphere with humidity; however, on the 7th, I left it for this city, which is delightfully situated on the banks of the Tarne, in the midst of a rich and extensive plain, commanding a delightful prospect, which is bounded on the south west by the Pyrenees, which even at this distance (one hundred miles) excite a most vivid idea of the venerableness and grandeur of nature, when throned on mountains capped with clouds. I can give you but a faint idea of the richness, and magnificence, and loveliness of the scenery which surrounds me. The weather is in general delightful, though in the middle of the day too hot; the harvest is rich in promise, and as far as regards hay and clover is already commenced partially. The groves are filled with nightingales, the fields with larks and cuckoos, the grass with chirping insects, all of which vie with each other in singing the pleasures of life and of spring; a song, which however varied in form, in the ear of a religious man, who delights to regard in nature the mirror of the Creator's goodness, is a chorus of gratitude and praise. Nor is man silent in this chorus; it is no rare thing to hear the labourers singing in the fields, and the country girls as they pass along the lanes with the knitting needle and the distaff, frequently express their gaiety by joining in the song. But the mildness of the climate, and beauty of the country, are not all the charms which my present situation possesses. Montauban is the seat of Protestant instruction in France; their only college for the education of young ministers is here; it is a large, convenient building, formerly a convent; there are upwards of thirty students, and six professors of the various branches of learning. I had a letter of introduction to the principal professor, as a young minister of the Reformed church of England. He received me with a hospitality truly English, introduced me to

the other professors, and I am on terms of familiarity with all the students, as well as with two of the pastors of the Protestant church here; one of whom, an eloquent preacher, I may venture to call my friend. I have permission to attend the college lectures free of expense; and though the professors and students know that I am a heretic, for I have made no secret of my principles, yet the most orthodox of them treat me as a Christian brother. To complete my good fortune, I am lodged in a boarding-house delightfully situated in the suburbs, where all besides myself are students at the college. I have a large well furnished chamber. Our hostess is truly a mother to me, and she seems only to fear that I should not express my wants freely. In a word, my dear Madam, I am in a situation which wants nothing but you and my other dear friends in England to make it as perfectly happy as earth will permit.' Mr Goodier here mentions his health, and gives a detail of his sufferings, which still continued uncommonly severe; he continues, 'They do not hinder me, however, from walking out in the country a great deal. I rise soon after, and sometimes with the sun, generally about five o'clock; the morning air is delicious, and I am very little within doors till about half-past eight. The middle of the day is in general too hot for walking, but after six I keep again moving till near eight; this, however, fatigues me. I sleep well, eat well, cough at present very little, and I trust Dr ——'s prescription will be of service to me. * * On the whole, my dear Mrs F., I think you will agree with me, in saying that I have every reason to rejoice in my visit to France. It has not only given me an opportunity of learning the language, which at present I speak and write daily, and of seeing a country, which has long engaged the attention of the world at large, but it has enabled me to collect a variety of particulars respecting the state of the French Protestants, a subject equally interesting and unknown in England. What I have learnt respecting them, has led me to form a plan, which I hope will have your and Mr F's approbation, and which, if it succeed, will lead me to regard my visit, and the sickness which occasioned it, as truly providential. I am convinced the Protestant ministers and students are, with few exceptions, very far from orthodox. They do not hesitate to preach directly against some of the doctrines of Calvinism, and on almost all the others, they guard an absolute silence. Mr H. is at present here endeavouring to lead the students back to Calvinism. He

meets with little success, and I am persuaded there wants nothing but a fair statement and a good defence of Unitarianism to gain converts. I have, therefore, proposed to translate and circulate, at their expense, some of the best Unitarian tracts. I expect an answer daily, and as I have no doubt of an affirmative one, I have to request that H. T. will send me by the first ship a good selection of these tracts.'

The favourable situation of Montauban, as the seat of Protestant study, for the diffusion of religious information, having thus occurred to Mr Goodier, in another letter to his friends in England, he thus continues the subject;—'I am collecting all the information in my power on the state of the French Protestants, who, in general, are very far from being Calvinists. I have never yet heard a doctrinal sermon, and in general I do not even hear an orthodox expression in the public services, if I except some vague language on the merits of Christ. At Bordeaux there are several demi-Unitarians, and their most popular minister would be condemned at once by our English Calvinists as a Socinian. Like the pastors of Geneva, he maintains an absolute silence; he has favoured me with a very friendly notice—in a letter which he did me the honour of writing, some weeks ago, he says,—"Pour moi, je ne jure ni par Luther, ni par Calvin. Je ne suis ni d'Appollos ni de Cephas. Je suis de Jesus Christ. Tout ce qui est clairement revélé dans l'Ecriture Sainte est l'objet de ma foi. J'admets tout ce qu'elle dit, sans vouloir sur ce qui est obscur, expliquer témérairement le pour quoi, et le comment. Les choses cachées sont pour L'Eternel." So far as I have yet learnt, this language is applicable to the majority of Protestant ministers in France. Believing that secret things belong unto God, they seldom preach upon the mysteries of the Gospel, as they are termed. Election, predestination, justification, and the operation of Divine grace, are subjects almost exploded; if there remain any orthodox doctrine in the pulpit, it is that of satisfaction.'

In the beginning of July, he grew rapidly worse, and his state of weakness became alarming; he therefore felt it necessary to inform his family of the painful change which had taken place. The following letter is addressed to them all.

'July 12, 1818.

'I find myself at length forced to the performance of a pain-

ful duty which by deferring I had hoped to escape, viz. that of making you fully acquainted with my present painful and feeble situation. I wish you to be prepared for all events; and when I tell you that I write this letter from a sick chamber, to which I have been confined for almost a week, chiefly in bed, in a state of such helplessness, as to be absolutely dependent on the kind offices of the family with whom I lodge, who have been forced for several nights past to watch with me; that for a month past I have been forced to employ the skill of an eminent physician of the town, who visits me twice a day, you will agree with me, that it is very possible you have seen me for the last time on this side the tomb. I wrote to you by a friend last week, a general account of the reverses which have led me to this state. I wish not to expatiate; my sufferings have been, and continue to be, very great, and it is quite sufficient that I have to bear them myself without making you suffer.

'Under these painful circumstances, the mercy of God has provided me every possible consolation, and in general my mind is tranquil and happy; oftener, indeed, disturbed on your account than on my own; and I earnestly pray, and confidently hope, that these consolations will soften your portion of this mysterious dispensation as they do mine. The grand truths of the Gospel, especially that of the universal love and fatherly character of Him in whose hands our breath is, confirmed as this doctrine is by reason and by past experience, fill me with humble confidence; and though death is awful, it has ceased to be terrible. When I look back on the merciful dealings of His providence during my long sickness, and reflect on the numerous and unexpected softenings I have constantly received from his paternal goodness, how can I doubt that all is working together for my good? that in the hands of a Father I shall always be safe? and that if his wisdom sees good to remove me from this earthly scene, it is only to remove to another, where my enjoyments will be increased, and where my perceptions of his everlasting mercy will be more lively, my views of his glorious designs for the children of men more extensive and enchanting? If I had had a doubt on this subject the wonderful interposition of His providence, in leading me, almost in spite of myself, to this house, would have removed it. There is not a single person in the family who does not strive to aid me, and the mistress is beyond all praise; all the day long she is in my chamber, with the exception of a few mo-

ments devoted to family affairs; she exhibits all the tenderness of a mother, performs the most menial offices with pleasure, and after all, she assures me that the pleasure of my acquaintance and friendship is an ample reward. I trust, however, my friends will enable me to reward her more substantially in case of my death, and if I live, I shall not fail to shew her my gratitude. * * * My doctor finds me better, and assures me there is hope; at all events, be tranquil; we *shall* meet again, if not here, at least in that world where there will be no more sorrow, no more tears. What can I say to my numerous friends? Give them my blessing—you will hear again shortly —be comforted.'

On the 23d of July Mr Goodier expired; he retained his composure and resignation to the last, and his own former conviction was realized, that 'he believed he should have hope even in death.' His hostess, whose kindness soothed his departing hours, communicated to his friends in England the particular circumstances of his death, in the following terms.

'You desire to be made acquainted with the minutest details of the life, and death of this excellent young man. I will endeavour to give you all possible satisfaction; but you will suffer me to omit the recital of those agonizing pains, which for the last three months I saw him endure. Soon after his arrival here his disorder took an alarming appearance; and though he then became convinced that his malady was incurable, that conviction had no power to shake the firmness of his soul, his cheerfulness was unabated, and the benevolent sweetness of his manners continued till he drew his last breath. When on his death bed, he used to request the students, on their visiting him, to unite with him in the prayers addressed to the Almighty, by the minister, whose pious offices he had desired, and on these occasions he edified all around him by his patience and resignation. The sufferings he endured in his throat, the last two days, prevented the usual distinctness of his speech; but all that I could gather from his lips throughout those trying moments, were words of true submission to the decrees of Providence, and of consolation for us; consolation which he entreated us likewise to impart to his father, and his other good friends in England. With undiminished fortitude, he expressed his last wishes respecting the rewards to be given in his name to his attendants; then informed us in what way he desired to have

his funeral conducted; dictated an inscription for his tomb, and then expired.'

On the 25th his funeral took place, which was attended by all the professors of the college, the Protestant ministers and students, and the English who dwelt there. M. Moline, the minister who had daily attended him to administer the consolations of the Gospel, delivered an appropriate address at the grave. Thus at the age of twenty-five, in the spring of life and youth, was he taken away, in the midst of increasing usefulness and virtue, in the very opening of all his benevolent plans and superior pursuits, and while existence still wore to him the charm of early freshness and hope.

The character of this excellent young man is sufficiently depicted in the events of his life and the extracts of his writing. But in order fully to appreciate it, it must not be forgotten that these were the attainments and the writings of one who had risen by his own exertion from an humble condition; who laboured as a weaver in his father's employment till he was twenty years of age, and who furnished himself for distinguished usefulness by cultivating at intervals of leisure, those talents, which others are occupied in training during all the years of childhood and youth. He is an instance of eminent and most praiseworthy success. He furnishes another proof of how much may be accomplished by the ardor and industry of a devoted mind.

His ruling principle was most conspicuously a deep and fervent devotion, and the whole strength of his mind and affections was bent upon spreading religion and doing good. Pain, sickness, and exhaustion were unable to shake his faith or put a period to his plans of usefulness. Even in his last weary months amongst strangers, he was active in observing and inquiring, in improving his own mind, and in projecting labours of benevolence to be done if God should give him strength.

He was distinguished, we have been delighted to observe, by the interest he took in the cause of the lower classes, and his earnest desire to preach the Gospel to the poor. 'He felt warmly for the common people,' (says the Christian Reformer,) 'whom he held in a degree of respect, which is perhaps rare in those, that in their early days have seen much of them, and have been afterwards raised somewhat higher in the scale of society.' Some proofs of this are given in passages above

quoted. 'We want preachers for the poor,' said he, 'and I flatter myself that I could be useful amongst them.' He speaks with great feeling of the Rossendale Christians, who had become Unitarians, 'without reading any Unitarian book but the Bible, and are almost entirely made up of those, who earn their bread by the sweat of the brow.' He was delighted on spending the night at the house of the minister of Rossendale, 'to find six or seven of the people, when the sun was set, come in to see and converse with their preacher. Most of them were without hats and coats, with their aprons and clogs (a sort of shoes with wooden soles) on, and one of them was smoking his pipe. They were all serious, and engaged in religious conversation with great readiness. Religion with them is an affair of the heart and life, not merely as with many, a speculative inquiry. I wish some of our cold and refined Presbyterians (as they are erroneously called) had been with me that night. I wish also to have had the company of those who have doubted, or affected to doubt, whether Unitarianism could be brought to dwell in the humble cottages of industrious poverty.'

Upon the whole—this was a minister with his Master's spirit—willing to spend and be spent in his service—cut off prematurely and mysteriously from an opening career of great usefulness—but leaving an example to be admired, a name to be loved, and a testimony, that cannot die, to the power and value of the truth as it is in Jesus.